STATEMENT

BY

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HONOURABLE MINISTER
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AT THE

THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN SUB ITEMS (a & b)

NEW YORK, 11TH OCTOBER, 2013
Mr. Chairman,

Nigeria commends the Secretary-General H.E. Ban Ki-moon, for his reports on the advancement of women. We also commend the Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, for her exemplary leadership. We note with appreciation the efforts of the President of the Executive Board of UN Women, H.E. Normans Penke, Permanent Representative of Latvia, in steering this body towards the global realization of the advancement of women. My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by Ethiopia on behalf of the African Group and Fiji on behalf of the G77 and China respectively.

2. Since 2006, when the Secretary-General's "In-depth study on all forms of violence against women" was issued, progress has been made in this area especially in public awareness and sensitization. However, a lot more still needs to be done in order to satisfactorily address the issues and challenges raised in the report. In particular, domestic violence in all its forms, as well as systematic violations of the rights of women in conflict situations have persisted as serious and insidious problems that need to be tackled at the national, regional and international levels.

3. In this regard, Nigeria has committed itself to accelerate the national and regional implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions especially on women, peace and security. Nigeria is making progress in implementing resolution 1325 as follow-up of the regional workshop on the resolution that took place in Dakar, Senegal in April 2013. In the same vein, Nigeria is stressing the importance of compliance with Council's resolution 1820 on ending acts of sexual violence against women in conflict situations.

4. To create public awareness and sensitize all relevant actors, Nigeria established an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Women and Peace with membership from the Military, Para-military and the Police, other relevant Ministries and Departments as well as civil society organizations working in the area of peace building and conflict resolution.
5. This is in addition to the launch of a National Action Plan and advocacy sensitization aimed at ensuring women's involvement in peace building and conflict resolution. A deliberate policy to recruit women into Defence and Police establishments has also been instituted by the Government. Nigeria is also committed to fulfilling its obligations under the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of women in Africa. Violence, poverty, lack of access to education and health care, and limited economic opportunities all combine to undermine the well-being of women and girls. We are therefore taking necessary measures to remove these inherent obstacles by addressing the systemic impediments to their effective realization.

Mr. Chairman,

6. Nigeria continues to demonstrate its genuine commitment to the advancement of women through the promotion of women empowerment and gender mainstreaming as a core Government policy and through sustained dialogue and advocacy with civil society and development partners. Women's socio-economic empowerment, gender equality, mainstreaming and budgeting have continued to gain prominence in national programmes and is contributing to shaping decision-making at all levels of governance.

7. In order to reduce the burden of poverty on women and girls, the Federal Government introduced a Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) to engage unskilled youths and women with a view to reducing the unemployment rate and social exclusion. The Government, in line with the present administration's Transformation Agenda, also launched the second edition of the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (You-WiN) Women Programme. The programme is targeted at boosting entrepreneurial activities and economic empowerment among young women between the ages of 20-45 years.

8. Recognizing that gender equality and women's empowerment were important for the growth and development of any society, the Government introduced an innovative Gender Responsive Budgeting strategy in January
2013, to deliver key results for women and girls in the following five Ministries: Health, Agriculture, Water Resources, Works and Communication Technologies.

10. For the 2013 fiscal year, a sum of $18,750,000 US Dollars was earmarked for these projects. Under the programme, the Government through the Ministry of Health, is scaling up to save a million lives through giving back health and hope to one-third of the pool of young girls and women on the Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF) repairs waiting list including provision of surgery and income generation activities for economic rehabilitation. A national policy on the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FMG) is also currently being finalized by the Ministry of Health.

11. Further to the innovative Gender Responsive Budgeting strategies, about 5 million women farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs are to receive mobile phones to access information on agro-inputs through the Government’s electronic wallet scheme; while the Ministry of Works will increase by 35% the number of women employed in public and rehabilitation works programmes as contractors, road construction workers and project evaluators.

Mr. Chairman,

12. My Government continues to implement a Conditional Grants Scheme (CGS) which is an innovative and successful mechanism to ensure partnership between Federal, State and Local Governments in order to enhance reproductive health in the country. The Scheme has seen the three tiers of Government spending over 375 million US Dollars in the last three years.

13. Furthermore, the National Gender Policy adopted seven years ago to engineer social change and provide women’s empowerment framework in Nigeria is currently being reviewed, in line with emerging national and international gender concerns. The policy framework will continue to provide
standards and set essential benchmarks to measure Nigeria’s performance with regards to the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming including women’s human rights promotion in the country at all levels.

14. The review will facilitate the advancement of women and promote gender equality in Nigeria including identifying gaps, challenges and evolving strategies to strengthen it in line with emerging gender concerns and international best practices. We will continue to mainstream the issue of gender into national plans in accordance with relevant UN resolutions. We call on the United Nations system to continue to support Member States in the implementation of national policies for the achievement of women empowerment and gender equality, through provision of technical support and capacity development to national machineries.

15. Finally, Mr. Chairman, we are committed to translating economic growth into equitable social development that guarantees a dignified and meaningful existence for all citizens, especially the most vulnerable - women and children. We call for the mainstreaming of a goal on women empowerment and gender equality in the post 2015 Development Agenda.

16. I thank you.